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Lawmakers Press EPA About Animas Spill, Seek Hearings

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By Tripp Baltz

Members of Congress are pressing the Environmental Protection Agency to be more forthcoming about what caused the agency's release of 3 million gallons of mining waste and sediment into the Animas River in southwestern Colorado.

Several lawmakers are calling for congressional hearings into the Aug. 5 incident at the Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colo. Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) said today that the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, which he chairs, will hold a hearing Sept. 9 to hear directly from the EPA about the agency's actions before and after the spill.

Smith said he has asked EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to testify at the hearing. "Weeks after the spill, families and businesses who depend on the Animas River continue to deal with uncertainty and limited information," Smith said. "As the agency entrusted by the American people to protect the environment and ensure the nation's waters are clean, the EPA should be held to the highest standard."

Rep. Scott Tipton (R-Colo.) told Bloomberg BNA that hearings are also likely to be conducted by the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

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